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Rebecca Thiele, St. Louis Public Radio

ST. LOUIS, MO - A Missouri congressman introduced new legislation Wednesday to help fight the growing meth problem.

Democrat Russ Carnahan said increased meth abuse is to blame for high crime rates in St. Louis, including recent car break-ins. Carnahan said meth addiction doesn't just affect the user.

"There is no question that the meth problem is hurting our communities," said Carnahan. "It's harmful effects encompass all aspects of society with direct correlation to crime rates, identity theft, child abuse and neglect, and domestic violence."

St. Louis County Police Captain Lawrence Stulce said this legislation will also help families of meth addicts.

"When the abuser is out there with his product, he's totally focused on himself," said Stulce. "And those around him are an afterthought."

Congressman Carnahan said better health care for addicts will lower demand for meth in Missouri. The most recent statistics show Missouri leads the nation in meth incidents, which includes lab busts and evidence of meth production.

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